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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center

SITUATION REPORT NUMBER 001

VENEZUELA TASK FORCE

2230 EDT Saturday, April 13, 2002

OAS FACT-FINDING MISSION TO CARACAS TOMORROW

(C) Organization of American States (OAS) SYG César Gaviria and the OAS Permanent Council (PC) President, El Salvadoran PermRep Margarita Escobar, plan to depart tomorrow for Caracas on a fact-finding mission expected to be authorized tonight or tomorrow morning by a resolution. They will return to Washington next week to brief the PC. The PC will then consider actions to be taken under the Inter-American Democratic Charter to restore the essential elements of democracy in Venezuela.

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CHAVISTAS SEIZE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AND MEDIA OUTLETS

(C) Chávez Vice President Diosdado Cabello, who may be at the Miraflores Presidential Palace, declared he was the acting president and called Chávez supporters to the palace. Chavistas, supported by the palace's Honor Regiment, seized the palace. Questioning whether Chávez had resigned, the regiment's commander insisted that Chávez be brought to the palace. Meanwhile, Chavistas assaulted and occupied all but one television station. The National Guard told Caracas daily *El Universal* to evacuate because it could not defend the paper's headquarters. (*Reuters, TF/Embassy telcon, Desk*)

PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT CARMONA REINSTATES ASSEMBLY

(S) In the face of widespread domestic and international criticism, Provisional President Pedro Carmona reversed course and reinstated the National Assembly. Carmona's action followed a broadcast by Military Commander General Efraín Vásquez in which the commander outlined a seven point plan to maintain constitutional continuity. One point of this plan was to restore the National Assembly. Carmona's restoration of the National Assembly came in the wake of major U.S. and international pressure, the potential of deep rupture's in the military, and opposition from political leaders. (*TF/Embassy telcons, Desk, Globovisión*)

AMERICAN CITIZENS OK

(U) There are no reports of Amcit injuries. Most US carriers have suspended flights. Caracas airport reported closed.

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